



County Borough of Bradford.

*Report of Medical Officer of Health to the Sanitary
Committee on Houses sub-let in separate tenements.*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

In accordance with instructions given on September 2nd, 1896, I have to submit a report on the sub-letting of houses in separate tenements, a practice which causes small houses originally intended for occupation by one family to be inhabited by two, three, or even four families.

In some parts of the town, more particularly the districts of White Abbey, Wapping and the area bounded by Leeds Road, Peel Street, Wakefield Road, and Vicar Lane, many houses are so divided that each room constitutes a separate tenement.

Owing chiefly, I believe, to the difficulty of collecting rent in these districts, a property owner will let out to a second person for a stated sum a certain block of houses, the person to whom the property is so let being allowed to extract as much more in the form of rent as he is able.

In consequence of this agreement each room is furnished, provided with a lock and key, and let as a "furnished apartment," at a rent which the sub-landlord considers commensurate with the benefits conferred. Many sanitary evils are associated with the system, the chief of which are as follows, viz. :—

1. *Overcrowding*, for it cannot be contended that a house intended for a family of four, five, or six persons can be in a satisfactory state when inhabited by twelve or fifteen persons.
2. *Accumulation of filth and objectional materials* on the steps or the inside staircase ; this part of the house being common to all the occupiers is seldom cleaned, and the decomposition of filth, which here finds a convenient resting place, gives rise to diseases of a diarrhœal character.
3. *Inadequate closet accommodation*. Although by subletting, the number of people in each house is augmented, no further privies or water-closets are erected, and if, as happens in some of the districts referred to, the occupants of each house join with those of two others at one closet, there may be only one privy or water-closet common to thirty-five or forty persons.

In order to abolish these insanitary conditions it is in my opinion necessary that sufficient closet accommodation be provided ; and that houses let in separate tenements be placed under supervision and made amenable to regulations somewhat similar to those applicable to common lodging houses.

Unfortunately I cannot find that the Sanitary Authority has any power to prevent houses being sub-divided and let as separate holdings, but there does exist (and in this I am supported by Mr. Stevens) power to compel owners of property to provide a separate closet for each house.

In accordance with Section 90, Public Health Act, 1875, it is also competent for the Sanitary Authority to frame bye-laws for fixing the number of persons who may live in a house or part of a house which is occupied by members of more than one family ; for the registration of houses so let or occupied ; for the inspection of such houses ; for enforcing drainage and provision of privy accommodation, and for promoting cleanliness and ventilation of such houses, for cleansing and limewashing of the premises at stated times, or the giving of notices and the taking of precautions in the case of any infectious disease.

My recommendations are that immediate steps should be taken for the purpose of securing one closet for each house, and that bye-laws be adopted for the regulation and inspection of houses let in lodgings or occupied by members of more than one family.

W. ARNOLD EVANS, M.D.

At a meeting of the Sanitary Committee held on Wednesday, September 9th, 1896, the following resolutions were passed :—

1. That the Inspector of Nuisances be instructed to serve notices requiring the owners of houses let off in separate tenements to provide a separate privy or water-closet and ashpit for each house so let.
 2. That it be an instruction to the Town Clerk and the Medical Officer of Health to prepare a code of bye-laws in reference to houses let in lodgings or occupied by members of more than one family, but not including common lodging houses, and submit the same to this Committee at a future meeting.
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